













# The supremacy of the orator

By Lucy Sutherland

STANLEY AYLING:  
The Elder Pitt  
478pp. Collins, £6.50.

Stanley Ayling has written an admirable biography of one of the most famous and in many ways the most remarkable of English statesmen. The difficulties facing the biographer of William Pitt, Lord Chatham, are acute. Not only are there the problems which face all who write lives of men who have been at the centre of affairs for a long period. In Pitt's case, his public career straddles twenty-five years of the reign of George II and eighteen years of the reign of his successor, George III. He saw the end of the Jacobite menace, three world wars, one of them outstandingly successful owing to his own efforts, another almost as outstandingly unsuccessful, and years which saw at home countless party battles and shifts of influence.

But also, in Pitt's case, the subject himself was such an extraordinary mixture of permanent qualities and incalculable changes, of strengths and weaknesses, that he defied the conventional biographer. His contemporaries and of later interpreters. Lord Rosborough in 1910 thought that his life "strictly speaking, can never be written at all", and Mr Ayling himself admits: "It has usually proved easier to explain and interpret Pitt's tactics and policies than to elucidate his character and personality." One pitfall into which biographers of statesmen are often tempted, that of losing the individual in the study of his time and place, is not a danger to the biographer of William Pitt. His outstanding and idiosyncratic personality is more likely to lead his biographer to the opposite error, that of seeing his subject outside the framework of his time and attributing to him motives and ideals inappropriate to it.

Mr Ayling begins by paying tribute to Basil Williams, who in 1914 produced what he calls as "by far the most authoritative of Pitt biographies". But he also draws attention to Basil Williams' part in fostering the cult of "the larger-than-life, marmoreal figure... into which history has transmogrified the living man". The overtones of Basil Williams' work are, he points out, "unmistakably dramatic and imperial". Pitt emerges as the paragon hero standing high above the intrigues, corruption, petty figures around him. "The statesman," he says, "reflects the mood of a vanished world". It also reflects an outdated stage of eighteenth-century historiography, for Basil Williams wrote his *Life of Pitt* before Sir Lewis Namier had revolutionized the study of eighteenth-century politics (and even the last of his publications, his volume of the *Oxford History of England*, marks him as of the pre-Namier era). Mr Ayling moves easily and confidently in the much more complicated field which he has inherited, and provides both instruction and pleasure to his readers in the process. The statue is brought down from its pedestal and is replaced by a man of flesh and blood. It is in no way an exercise in debunking (and indeed no one, contemporary or later, has dared to take liberties with this formidable figure). It is rather a salvage operation.

To sum up what he thinks at the end of the day is the modern judgment of William Pitt. He says it approaches, nearer perhaps, even in its con-

temporaries. They saw a Pitt of paradoxes and contradictions; a Whig whose strongest appeal was to Tories and independents, an enemy to all parties because constituting a party in his own person; a venerator of the monarchy; a leader gifted with genius but liable unaccountably to throw everything aside; an enigma, never predictable; when he gave his mind to it; an unmatched orator; according to taste, either a heroic paragon or an unscrupulous demagogue; and — this at least being universally agreed — a supremely able and successful war minister.

One clear advantage is available to the historian which Pitt's contemporaries lacked — a much more sophisticated body of medical knowledge in terms of which one can describe the strange and recurrent physical and nervous collapses which punctuated his career, which would have early wrecked that of any lesser man, and which finally led to the hopeless catastrophe of his own poisoning ministry in 1766-68. After that disaster, though he still had his moments of brilliance, they were scattered and discontinuous, and even his passionate feeling about the American war could not give him back his grasp. But rather than with our diagnosis of a manic-depressive condition, nor the eighteenth century with its universal diagnosis of "gout", get further than the fact which all who knew him recognized: there was "a dash of madness" in all "the cockatrice brood" of Pitts.

On the other hand, his contemporaries had one great advantage over us in understanding his career. They comprehended, as we cannot, the extraordinary influence of oratory on an eighteenth-century House of Commons, whose education had a largely consisted of the study of the orators of antiquity, and the circumstances in which this oratory could take effect. The great oratorical effects of the period were achieved in Opposition, and the speeches which captivated their audiences were composed of a mixture of the "country party" eloquence of the eighteenth century and the "urbanity" of the eighteenth century (what Edmund Burke in a moment of exasperation called "talking fustian") and brilliantly expressed and daringly conceived invective against an administration, or an individual minister. Close reasoning was of secondary importance (though respected); detailed analysis or the imparting of information was positively disliked as suitable only to a man of business. "I can tell you," someone said of Henry Legge. The whole was delivered in a dramatic style entirely foreign to the parliamentary oratory of later times. "It was never," Mr Ayling remarks, "so much on the closeness of his reasoning, as on an imaginative and dramatic effect... that Pitt built his tremendous oratorical reputation."

It is not easy for us to recapture the atmosphere in which these flights of rhetoric were delivered, or to understand their practical significance in a House of Commons dominated by management and connection. Yet Pitt said of himself: "I never cultivated the talent of being an instrument of action." In normal times the exercise of this talent infuriated the victims (unless other circumstances prohibited it) help the orator to office to keep him quiet, without having any real influence on votes or policy, but in all times of stress, and particularly in the dangers and vicissitudes of war, such

oratory could carry all before it, and exert its powers on a wider public than that of the House to which it was addressed. It would be an anachronism to attribute Pitt's rise to power after the loss of Minorca in 1756 to the influence which his speeches had won him over extra-parliamentary forces in town and country; but everyone recognized that they greatly strengthened his position.

When Pitt told the Duke of Devonshire in the same year that he knew that he could save England and that no one else could, he was claiming two things, one of which was true and the other not. He still believed, and his followers believed implicitly, that the blue-war strategies he had been thundering for over many years were the right ones and that he could introduce them. It was only by degrees that he realized that they must be relegated to the category of what he described as "juvenile errors". The advent of Pitt to



The Death of Chatham: an engraving after the Tate Gallery's painting by J. S. Copley, now in America for the Bicentennial celebrations.

## Appointments and disappointments

By Norman Gash

PETER DIXON:  
Canning  
Politician and Statesman  
355pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson, £7.50.

George Canning is ready-made material for the biographer. The man of brilliant talents and superb social origins: the precocious political success who in 1812 threw away the supreme opportunity of his career — to represent his constituents in the Congress of Vienna two years later — because he also insisted on the leadership of the House of Commons held by his rival, Castlereagh; the disappointed and disillusioned man who compounded for failure at home with lucrative exile as Governor General in India, only to be recalled on the eve of embarking on the Foreign Secretary; the politician abruptly elevated to the premiership by Liverpool's stroke in 1827 only to die himself after but four months of power. It is not surprising that almost from the moment of his death he has attracted the attention of writers and historians.

Books on Canning fall into three categories. First there are the nineteenth-century memoirs and "correspondence" books, heavily documented but largely uncritical, that came to an end with Joceline Bago's *George Canning and His Friends* in 1909. The next chronological group, more professionally and more judiciously written, included orthodox lives by J. A. R. Marriott and Sir Charles Pease, Harold Temperley's authoritative monograph on Canning's foreign policy, and Dorothy Marshall's study of his early career published just before the war. The opening-up of the war of the Canning papers preserved in the archives at Harwood House began a new era in Canning studies of which the best example was Wendy Midgley's

power led to no change in war strategy either in Europe or America, apart from the largely unsuccessful despatch on the French coast. But he also meant that he could galvanize the war effort as no one else could, both by the force of his personality and the support which he enjoyed, and here events abundantly bore out his claim.

His great war ministry was at once the climax of his career and also its watershed. Always arrogant and difficult, these years of intense effort and great responsibilities left him socially as well as politically isolated. Even his greatest support, the devotion of his wife and children, increased this isolation. His most faithful political supporters commented that personal friendship played no part in his life. The very nature of his wartime experience, moreover, was a handicap in post-war politics. During the war he could and did consider everything not directly connected with the winning of it as

insignificant and unimportant. It was thus able to cooperate with Newcastle and other political leaders (though he did so with a good deal of friction) without thinking of them as equals to him. But now destroys the over-riding priority of war and he could not tolerate the idea of working on more or less equal terms with any of the political leaders whose cooperation was necessary for eighteenth-century government. No doubt he towered over all his possible allies or rivals in personality and reputation, and (until he abandoned the House of Commons) his oratorical command was greater than ever, but there can be little doubt that his failure to come to terms with his position and his collapse played a big part in causing the weakness of administration which led up to the American revolt.

Mr Ayling makes full use of the scattered traces which remain of the private life which Pitt tried to keep so secret, a story sometimes touching, often absurd but basically tragic, with that element of magnificence which tragedy demands. In his public life he follows him through good years and bad with sympathy but with scrupulous fairness. He digresses as little as may be to deal with the men who were Pitt's allies or opponents (frequently the same men filled both roles at different times), but he goes out of his way to say some kind words for the luckless Newcastle, who made Pitt's success possible, despite his "unique talent for sounding infinitely more fatuous than he was". With the Rockingham Whigs Mr Ayling is less sympathetic, though he passes no judgment on them. It is a small point, though a pity, that he perpetuates the misinterpretation of the one-sentence letter which the Marquis of Rockingham wrote to Edmund Burke on December 3, 1777, when the defeat of Saratoga became known: "My heart is at ease." As the complete edition of Burke's Letters conclusively shows, his heart was not at ease because of the defeat of his country's forces but because successful measures had been taken to avert a duel in which Burke threatened to become involved as the result of a quarrel in the House: a sentiment which most people would consider more reputable.

admirable George Canning which came out three years ago.

To this baker's dozen of works that form the corpus of published writing on Canning's career, another has now been added by Peter Dixon. It should be added by the outset that his *Canning* yields nothing to its predecessors in carelessness of scholarship and breadth of documentary sources. As a straight-forward account of Canning's life within the compass of 287 pages it is better than anything at present available.

But judging the book by more rigorous standards, it is hard to avoid the ungrateful feeling that the author is dealing a well-known story. Certainly his wide researches in the manuscript material now accessible have enabled him to bring in new details on such matters as the sources of Canning's information about the secret clauses of the Treaty of Tilsit, his electioneering at Liverpool, and his work at the India Board between 1816 and 1820. For all of this historians will be grateful. Yet substantially his book does nothing to change or add to the essential portrait of the man or our general picture of the political world of his time. If a historical biography is to stand on its own merits, it must give us a fresh insight into the relationship between the man and his age.

Mr Dixon's book, however, shows little sense of the subtleties in the relationship between Canning and the Liverpool government which dominated the last fifteen years of his life. A study of John Cookson's book *Lord Liverpool's Administration 1815-1822*, which he does not mention in his bibliography, would have helped him here. Nor can he be said that he gives a good general account of the part played by Canning in the many facets of the period: nor of the many facets in his complicated personality which made him so loved and so

example, that great load of distrust which prompted half the Cabinet to resign when he became Prime Minister in 1827? Why did he resign in 1827, and the same number devoted to the coercive colonial legislation of 1774, barely permit an authoritative statement of measures of fundamental importance for the development of the empire.

It is doubtful for the same reason that the author is prevented from discussing the broader aspects of his subject's life. North, although the son of a poor, and in his last years a member of the House of Lords, had habits and connections far more typical of a country gentleman than a magistrate, a fact which had an important bearing on his ministerial career. Yet relatively little is said about his social and family background. (Nor indeed are the North manuscripts in the Bodleian Library, which cast considerable light on both, even cited in the bibliography.) The very competence with which the author handles his brief strongly reinforces the sus-

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## Defender of the House

By Paul Langford

PETER D. G. THOMAS:  
Lord North  
176pp. Allen Lane, £6 (paperback, £3).

The bicentennial of the Declaration of Independence is, as the publishers doubtless judged, no bad time to issue a new biography of Lord North, America's last acknowledged Prime Minister and the man who presided over the dissolution of the first British Empire. North has been the subject of three major biographical treatments: two of them, by Lucas and Pemberton, now somewhat dated, and a third, by Valentin, highly unsatisfactory. Consequently Peter Thomas's study is most welcome, more especially as he brings to the subject an unrivalled knowledge of parliamentary proceedings during the years of North's establishment as leader in the House of Commons and as Prime Minister, and a scholarship rigorously disciplined by long acquaintance with "Namier's period".

If the book has defects they are the defects of the series, which aims, laudably but ambitiously, to produce biographies both concise and authoritative. In this case the limitations imposed by the demands of brevity seem particularly constricting; 153 pages for a long and important political career, twelve years of which were spent at the very pinnacle of power and indeed to his career in general was Parliament: Parliament which, after all, meant far more to him than to most. Since the early nineteenth century Prime Ministers have in large measure derived their power from their party or the electorate, however effective they have been as parliamentarians; and before the late eighteenth century they were courtiers first, and MPs second. But North's career is a different matter. He was first and foremost a House of Commons man, who as he himself said, owed both his making and unmaking to it. The late eighteenth century was arguably Westminster's greatest age, and North's career is a study in the pattern of politics, unopposed by economic forces or new social groups beyond its control, supremely confident of its own total primacy, and devoted to its own ends. The extensive imperial legislation of the 1760s and 1770s, and justified in Blackstone's celebrated exposition of parliamentary sovereignty, the House of Commons was supremely powerful, and North a peculiarly appropriate leader of it.

But for the war, North's ministry would almost certainly have been longer than it was, and unquestionably far more successful. The key to his career in general was financial juggling of forties and shares issues to obtain the best possible terms of government borrowing, all found North at his best and all made him the darling of that critically important but somewhat anonymous class, the country gentlemen.

Whether it is worth grading Prime Ministers by success is debatable, though the exercise is undertaken, it would be difficult to disagree with the author's final conclusion that North must be placed at the top of the second rank. What is significant, however, about his career is the essential basis in the narrow but influential world of Westminster. Dr Johnson drew a famous contrast between two of the century's greatest Prime Ministers, observing that Sir Robert Walpole was a minister given by the king to the people, the elder Pitt a minister given by the people to the king. He might equally have added that Lord North was a minister given to the king and people by the House of Commons.

## The master manager

By John Brewer

BETTY KEMP:  
Sir Robert Walpole  
147pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson, £4.25.

Robert Walpole achieved for the Whigs what Sir Harold Wilson has achieved for the Labour Party; he made them the natural party of government. Many circumstances helped Walpole in his task, not least the passage of the Septennial Act in 1716 which halved the frequency of general elections, but his personal achievement is indisputable. Walpole was the first minister to understand the importance of sitting in the House of Commons, and of winning the confidence of the lower House to the unwavering trust of the king and his courtiers. He elevated both.

The author seems chiefly concerned to emphasize the differences between eighteenth-century and modern constitutional practice. The term "prime minister" she argues was derogatory rather than descriptive, parties (at least in the modern sense) were not involved, and the constitutional conventions of the day did not add up to the party system. It is a pity that the words, her account marred by a tedious string of negatives which has become one of the great clichés about eighteenth-century politics.

At every point in his career he defended Parliament against the Middlesex electors in 1769, against the press in 1771, against the new-fangled doctrine of radicals at home and rebels in the colonies, against the corporate power of the East India Company, against the systematic opposition of the City of London, and above all against the Crown itself. It was North who when the House was last defeated in the Commons in 1782 lectured the king himself on the duties of a monarch: "The Parliament have altered their sentiments and their sentiments whether just or erroneous, must prevail."

Like most biographers, and no doubt very reasonably, Dr Thomas feels the need to defend his subject — a herculean task in this case. North, as he points out, has long been the epitome of an abysmally bad Prime Minister. The discredit of serving George III and opposing the great Whig class has been somewhat diminished by recent scholarship, but it is not so easy to cover up the loss of an empire. As a war minister North was an unqualified disaster; the best that can be said of him is that he neither played nor sought to play a significant part in the strategic direction of warfare, the worst that he was conceived of his utter ineptitude and his failure to make someone else take on the job, nor the capacity to surmount it. For the last five years of his premiership he presented the extraordinary spectacle of a Prime Minister merely in name, a puppet, a combination of king and civil servant, and presiding over a cabinet which was rather a collection of individuals than an effective organizing machine. There is a case to be made, and Dr Thomas makes it for North's solid achievements at the Treasury during this depressing period. But ultimately he could not and cannot escape the responsibility of being a chief factor in Britain's most comprehensive defeat in modern times.

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# The flaunting of the device

By Alex de Jonge

ROBERT ALTER:

Partial Magic  
The Novel as a Self-Conscious Genre  
248pp. University of California Press. £5.50.

Robert Alter has written a book which reminds us that the reader of the novelists of high realism who invite us to accept the worlds their books offer as if they were life itself, there exists a second, no less potent, tradition: that of the self-conscious novelist who, in the process of concealing the essential artificiality of his art, makes it as obvious as possible. The reader may feel at first that he scarcely needs the reminder. The joys of self-conscious art were after all proclaimed by Viktor Shklovsky and the formalists in the early 1920s, and have continued to be proclaimed ever since. Indeed Robert Alter, who quotes Shklovsky once in an epigraph, would appear to have an unimpeachable debt to the author of *About the Theory of Prose*. It is my guess that Alter's term "the flaunting of the device" in his view a distinctive feature of self-conscious novels, is an elegant rendering of Shklovsky's *ostraneniye priyema*, or exposure of devices.

In Shklovsky's view awareness of a novel's fundamental artificiality is central to our experience of it, which is why he has described *Tristram Shandy* as the most typical novel of world literature: "most typical because it compels one to admit that peculiar agreement which any reader of any novel must enter into with its author, stipulating that for the sake of his aesthetic pleasure the author is prepared to grant the author certain concessions, authorial licence. The precise nature of the concessions obviously varies enormously, but their existence is a 'fictional universal' whatever the novelist may pretend to the contrary."

The existence and the nature of such concessions were carefully examined by Diderot. His first serious novel, *La Religieuse*, though born of a desire to write of high miniature realism. Many of its techniques, its portraits for example, anticipate the loaded descriptions of Thackeray. However, it is incredibly interesting to see that whole sections of Diderot's novel have been lifted virtually word for word and incorporated into a very different work, Lewis's *The Monk*, showing how context can shift a piece of writing from high realism to Gothic fantasy.

At all events it would seem that writing *La Religieuse*, and discovering that he could be profoundly moved, moved in turn, by his own writing, was a revelation for Diderot. The experience of fiction, the experience of the novel, is in part, a study in the nature of that experience. Diderot demonstrates that a novelist can compel his reader to accept a peculiar and seemingly one-sided kind of agreement which breaks all the conventional ground rules of verisimilitude. The novelist may run several conflicting strands of narrative in parallel, he may discuss them, interrupt them, protest that he is, or is not, all-powerful, and constantly remind his reader that his experience has no reality beyond that of the words on the page before him; and all this without preventing the reader from relating to the text, "as if" it were "real". Diderot has a clear understanding of the relation that exists between knowing and feeling. We never know that the hero of *La Religieuse* is a murderer until he has committed the crime, but it is not a convincing ourselves of that, nor a comforting fact in the hope that the reminder will make us settle back from the edge of our seats. Diderot's novel illuminates and investigates the experience of reading, and clarifies the scope and nature of the agreement which the reader enters into with the novelist.

Partial Magic is a careful and delicate study of this kind, from Cervantes to the present day. Although the ground has been covered so well, the author is to be over-impressed by bad but interesting works, or critics. Although he refers to Barthes occasionally he does so with some reserve, and has steered completely clear of

still wilder and sillier shores of modern French, and, worse, Franco-Saxon criticism. His opening study of *Don Quixote* is crisp and illuminating. Indeed, the whole proper, chapter is a microcosm of the entire work. His descriptions of the way in which Cervantes plunges his readers into "analogical vertigo" is a difficult task particularly well done. He is also at pains to describe the appropriate parallels between the fictional techniques of Cervantes and the rise of philosophical scepticism. It is worth recalling that Cervantes was just fourteen years younger than Montaigne.

The author is equally aware of the philosophical implications of Diderot's fiction. One of the concerns of *Jacques le Fataliste* is to demonstrate the impossibility of being certain about anything, since we only have just experience to go on.

A rejected mistress in search of revenge can produce an ex-lover to a modest youth to have him discover on his wedding day that he has just married a whore. But the mistress is thwarted in her revenge when, somewhat against the odds, the young couple live happily ever after. Yet Diderot does not, as suggested, imply, in the face of the possibility of over-knowing, communicating or describing anything. It is hard, Jacques says, but not impossible, "dire la chose comme elle est". Impossibility as such will have to wait for the twentieth century.

The book proceeds to examine the eclipse of the self-conscious novel in the nineteenth century. Although the reasons advanced for its decline are concerned with high realism, social instability, Napoleon, the city are sound, one agrees with them rather than learning from them. Indeed the extent of the eclipse is itself questionable. Certainly there was no hint of self-consciousness in Balzac, who rightly

takes pride of place in this chapter. Yet there were other writers—Pushkin, Gogol, Lermontov for example—who fit the bill, as indeed does Stendhal. For surely Stendhal's intervention, his affectionate and ironic comments, and indeed that irony which infuses the work of so many nineteenth-century writers, is itself a form of interiorized self-consciousness. Where Sterne or Diderot questioned the status of their fictions flamboyantly, Stendhal worked in more discreet but no less detached a manner.

Robert Alter demonstrates his critical good taste in his examination of Melville's *The Confidence-Man*, a work which, in its conception, is so strikingly similar to *Don Quixote*. He does not allow its obvious qualities and its appeal to professional exegeses to conceal the fact that as a work of art it has a great deal to offer. The same sense of critical discretion is shown in his assessment of *Gilda*. He is surely right to hold such a high opinion of *Les Caves du Vatican*, with its splendid use of parody, shifting values and shifting viewpoints which combine to undermine any sense we may have of a stable reality. He is equally right to speak harshly of *Les Fausses Confessions*, as an unstable and ill-digested piece of work, over-indulgent in "self-gratifying... fantasy". Both points have long needed making.

Yet the author only comes to his very best in his study of Nabokov. Here again his critical discretion appears. He has no patience with critics who are content to devote themselves to laying bare Nabokov's subtlety—to the extent of offering diagrams as an exegesis of the first chapter in *Invitation to a Beheading*. He recognizes that, in Nabokov's not self-justifying, it must have an aesthetic function. The point is made in an excellent analysis of *Pole Fire*, emphasizing details such as the role played in Zambian culture by glass

—lucky they never had a *Kristallnacht* there.

But analysis of detail is subordinated to an examination of the central concern of the work, a concern which he believes to be the central theme of the self-conscious novel as such. Essentially the self-conscious writer, Nabokov, attempts to create his own kind of fragile order from form, in a mortal's brave attempt to defy a world of mortality, time, and essential chaos. The order of art is contrasted with the disorder of just about everything else. Yet novelists of this kind will not pretend that the order they create is embracing. They constantly shift away from their fragile constructs to remind us of their essential fragility in the face of "that other world of ours, ruled by chance and given over to death", to remind us in Humbert Humbert's despairing words that "Oh my Lolita, I have only words to play with". For Robert Alter is the central concern that informs the work of all self-conscious novelists.

His contention certainly adjusts our view of pre-nineteenth-century novelists such as Sterne, Fielding and Diderot, yet I wish he had admitted, sympathetically, that they are separated from our own century by a fundamental, albeit technical difference: the restrictions of their narrative convention.

In an age when the idea of an all-powerful novelist who can get "inside the head" of more than one character is not admitted, the writer is confined by certain conventions of verisimilitude. These conventions are not to be broken, or to use a first person narrator—or a series of them in the *roman à thèâtre*, or to resort to devices involving the discovery of notes of letters in an old chest. Now it certainly happens that the novelist may seek to exploit such conventions as Sterne or Diderot did, yet the concern for a certain kind of technical verisimilitude

quite foreign to our own age, is making an enduring one. How many of the critical discussions which Corvantes and Diderot incorporated into their works involve verisimilitude of one kind or another? It is perhaps the rigour of these constraints which the exuberance with which those novelists thrived upon them which gives their work the animation which Robert Alter misses in some contemporary writers. It is precisely because they wrote in essentially different circumstances, according to a different set of rules, that one sometimes a little unhappy at the ease with which this work joins eighteenth and twentieth-century writers together.

Yet the author never allows his central thesis to cloud individual judgments, never lets it put a real strain on his study. Indeed, it is the author's so much adjectives, in German onslaught. Only truly dedicated "war-loving people" (to stand a favourite Russian expression on its head) will be able to appreciate fully the author's insight and the prodigious labour involved in the interweaving of technical detail with the minutiae of human suffering, which together have produced this great epic of agony and heroism.

The book can give no answer to the riddle that has always confounded historians: is there causality in history or is history the creation of human free will? Tolstoy grappled with the problem in *War and Peace*, and he came to the conclusion that free men are compelled to do things by forces beyond their control. Tolstoy, of course, was dealing with Napoleon, whose genius he denied.

On the road to Stalingrad history was supposedly shaped by demonic Hitler and tyrannical Stalin. The power of the two dictators, the will of the wills and the destinies of millions was something outside the reach of Napoleon even in imagination, and it sheds a bizarre light on the question of compulsion and free will. With all the influence Hitler and Stalin certainly had on the course of the war they waged, they do not make a very remarkable showing in the cold light of historical scrutiny. If we are to judge by Professor Erickson's book, they do not emerge as the great heroes of this tremendous tragedy of blunders. Hitler remains a grey blur throughout, and by the end even Stalin, who is the central figure of the book, does not take on human dimensions.

Early on in the book, Stalin is called "indisputable master of the Red Army". This he definitely was, yet at first he was not what the army needed, desperately, a commander-in-chief of the Soviet armed forces. From June 22 to July 3, Stalin did not once appear in public, and on the face of it the war was being conducted by Zhukov, the chief of staff, and the commanders of lower rank, and also by the courage and initiative of junior commanders and soldiers. Stalin faced the Russian people on July 3, when he delivered an amazing speech, a last appeal to the people to persevere, and it was not until August 8, 1941, that Stalin at long last assumed the post of supreme commander of the Soviet armed forces. By that time the Red Army was moving, towards the edge of destruction, "at the title of Chapter 5 puts it. No wonder there have been so many different accounts of Stalin's whereabouts during the first period of the war. When Professor Erickson writes that by July 10 "the book" had recovered from "his earlier frights", he apparently adopts the view that Stalin had previously been in a very human thing: it had happened to many generals—more experienced than Stalin in the art of warfare—who failed to make the transition from peacetime conditions to war. For all the comprehensive research in Professor Erickson's book, his account of this matter is not absolutely convincing. Did he take the view he did because there is no better explanation or because there is no published evidence on documents? Field Marshal Lord Montgomery reveals in his memoirs that Stalin had a sense of humour, but even if he had, it certainly did not appear during the first two grim years of war between Barbarossa and the German code-name for the attack on the Soviet Union) and "Uranus" (the Soviet code-name for the Stalingrad counter-offensive). Yet Stalin could show himself human at times: he actually spoke warmly to Yankovskiy, commander of the mechanized corps, on the eve of the counter-offensive at Stalingrad, instead of shouting and cursing, as was his habit.

Generally this book demonstrates how much the surrealists' adventure in the surreal, their presence at the helm, is a failure, one of scope: on the one hand Mlle Bonnet's actual writing, so that her account of his military activities in the years of the 1920s season were relegated to a footnote; while on the other hand, she does not give scope to close, critical analysis of Breton's more obvious texts. The book is a very good introduction to Breton's life, and a kind of prologue to the *Manifeste* which is scarcely discussed, and his commentary on the surrealists' *Chair de terre* is sketchy. On the credit side are some perceptive pages dealing with the surrealists' determinations in the anti-fascist, full-scale exposition of the *Manifeste* which rounds off the book.

All in all one may feel that Breton's *Oeuvres complètes*, now being prepared by Mlle Bonnet for the Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, are a good thing, though one hopes that the editing of Breton's texts will not neglect to underline the point that for Breton writing meant not "l'écriture littéraire" but the mobilization of resources in a more serious enterprise.

RUSSIA

## Death and transfiguration

By Amnon Sella

JOHN ERICKSON:

The Road to Stalingrad  
616pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson £12.

In *The Road to Stalingrad* John Erickson tells with masterly skill the story of Hitler's road to Hades across the limitless plains of the Russian and the Red Army's frenzied exertions to contain the German onslaught. Only truly dedicated "war-loving people" (to stand a favourite Russian expression on its head) will be able to appreciate fully the author's insight and the prodigious labour involved in the interweaving of technical detail with the minutiae of human suffering, which together have produced this great epic of agony and heroism.

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The real heroes of *The Road to Stalingrad* are human beings in formation, the tank divisions, corps, artillery regiments, ferry-boat crews, and the whole multitude of citizens who struggled to defend their homeland amid "sweat and toil and blood". The book does no more than hint at the motives that impelled all these men and women, sailors, soldiers and airmen, to do what they did. No proper explanation is discernible. Ilya Ehrenburg once tried to define the Soviet spirit during those years—he called it "the science of hatred". The reader of this book will learn far more about what the road to Stalingrad was like than why the Russian soldier took all this incredible punishment and still kept on fighting, or why the German soldier was so stubbornly determined to conquer the Russian. It is only part of the explanation that the average reader of the NKVD special squads drove the Soviet soldiers to slaughter with submachine-guns aimed at their backs, nor does the power of the Hitler's orders explain everything on the German side. Some of the reasons can be understood only when the picture on the grand scale is broken down into basic human needs and miseries:

Yeremenko and his divisions spent four days buried in the snow... in a temperature racing down to -40° C. When they captured the giant German dumps at Toropets, the troops could feed, but first they had to fight their way into them.

It was the basic instinct of self-preservation, the need of the human animal for warmth and shelter, that drove those frightened, miserable heroes to struggle on, first in the forests near Toropets and then later, on a gigantic scale, in Stalingrad. These instincts are explicable. But what was it that drove Hitler into the blunders of Barbarossa, what made him wildly underestimate his enemies, and what was it that made Stalin in his turn blunder so grossly in his counter-offensive near Moscow and later on in misreading German war aims? Thucydides wrote in his *Peloponnesian Wars*: "True wisdom is shown by those who make careful use of their advantages in the know. Judge that things will change." Stalin's military leaders and soldiers expended nearly 200,000 lives and millions of dead bodies, but he was learning and so were the commanders and soldiers, and so was the Red Army as a whole. Those who could not learn fast enough were well enough to be killed by the enemy or shot by military tribunals or left to die at the roadside.

The book is in part the story of how the fine human and industrial potential of the Soviet Union was forged into a formidable, professional war machine. By the end of

1941 there could still be "a costly and unimpaired frontal attack" as we read of Russian infantry as late as May 1942 charging savagely with linked arms. But after a year and a half of fierce fighting and terrible debacles, after the ordeal by fire at Stalingrad, the Red Army had learnt the value of counter-offensive, of armour, artillery and air power, and the success to be won by indirect approach.

Another learning process took place in relations between the military and the Communist Party. Under the impact of defeats and the chaos at the beginning of the war, the military commander was put back into a position of direct control; and when it came to preparing for operation Uranus, the commissar forfeited his control and "military command" resigned again.

The book covers almost every possible aspect of the war. The only two subjects that a pedantic reader might feel the lack of are the displaced persons, and the role of the women in the war and the military service in operation. A remarkable thing among the many that are given outstanding treatment in the book is that of industry and its evacuation to the east. On going through the figures of Soviet output, the reader will be brought to realize that it was not only the grim tenacity of the Soviet soldier and the ruthlessness of General Winter (to favour the German) which eventually turned the scales in favour of the Red Army.

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Technical intricacies here and there add the not very few index may place some obstacles in the way of inexperienced and uninformal readers. Nevertheless, the tension created in most of the chapters is breathtaking. In these pages Professor Erickson has orchestrated a whole symphony of death, defiance and dawning hope.

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Few historians nowadays are satisfied with the epithets "backward", "inefficient" or "corrupt" when applied to the nineteenth-century Russian bureaucracy. It may, of course, be based on these things, but the numerous recent studies of nations in the modernist process have made us sharply aware both of the difficulties of the past and of the specific ways in which they set about solving them. George Yaney's recent study, *The Systematisation of Russian Government, 1711-1905*, showed them gradually formulating a modern administrative system, fully slowly, trying to apply the state to the elusive society in their trust, which consisted overwhelmingly of peasants living, physically and mentally light years away from the imposing ministerial facade of St. Petersburg. That book told us, I think, a great deal, but suffered somewhat from a tortuous intellectual framework, while its extended account of the history of the individual questions. Richard G. Robbins's book therefore complements it well, for it shows in great detail Russian officialdom grappling with a single problem: *Famine in Russia, 1891-2*, is based on very thorough research in the central state archives (which include a lot of documentation on provincial Elites), and its conclusions offer vivid confirmation of some of Yaney's more speculations.

The famine of 1891-92 resulted not just from a very bad harvest in the black-earth provinces and the effects of lasting pressure on the peasant economy, going back to the Emancipation of 1861 and indeed beyond. Famine relief legislation of the 1860s allotted much of the responsibility in this area to the zemstvos, the newly established (elected) organs of local government, but also provided for national funds and supplies to be sent to any area which could not meet its own needs. This arrangement reflected the ways the government's general conception of its relations with the *zemstvos*; the latter were expected to stimulate the local economy, to generate local political loyalty and to act where necessary as agents of the central administration.

The actual working of the relief programme, as expounded in this book, shows most of the ambiguities (not necessarily weaknesses) noted by Yaney. Though the system was theoretically autocratic, there was no coordination at the centre, unless the emperor himself provided it, which was seldom so; the various ministries went their own ways. Emergencies tended to spawn special committees, as well as being dealt with through regular channels. The Ministry of the Interior was nominally in charge of the relief operation, but was at loggerheads with the Ministry of Finance, which wanted to collect extra taxes from the peasants, not make loans to them, and resented priority given to food supplies over industrial goods on the railways. In the provinces the governors, theoretically appointed by the central government, were in fact had considerable independence, both because of their secure territorial base and because of their historical significance as local representatives of the Imperial Power. A competent and energetic governor, like Baranov of Nizhny Novgorod, could get away with organizing his own famine relief committee and by-passing the *zemstvos*, using ministerial officials and the newly appointed *zemstvo* officials to implement his policies. As for the *zemstvos*, they had no foundation and no roof, as the saying was at the time: they lacked immediate contact with the peasants, their lowest unit being at the district (*uezd*) level, which might contain hundreds of villages, and they also lacked coordination at national level, and therefore found themselves doing irrational things like competing with each other for licence to supply and thus forcing the price. The land commanders, appointed by the Ministry of the Interior from among the local nobility, were the people who knew the villages, the communal elders, the clerics and policemen who actually handed out money and supplies to those who would consume them. So the government was at the centre and at the grass roots, while the *zemstvos* were suspended uneasily in between.

There is still something of a legend that famine relief work roused the public, including the *zemstvos*, to effective work in an area where the government's efforts fell short. Dr Robbins's study puts the effect in perspective. He states that private philanthropy contributed some 12,000,000 roubles out of a total of about 150,000,000. This was respectable, but certainly does not overshadow the government's efforts in perspective. He also states that both the *zemstvos* and private sources were working either under direct governmental supervision or were at least serving their contributions activated at local level by the government. He also states that the public could achieve little without the government's cooperation and coordination.

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## The quest for Surrealism

By Roger Cardinal

MARGUERITE BONNET:

André Breton  
Nécessaire du venturisme surréaliste  
460pp. Paris: José Corti, 75fr.

André Breton's early writings play on a dual register. Whether in prose or poetry, they tend to combine public statements pertaining to a general project of Surrealism with personal confessions in the form of a private companion piece, the "official" theme. Since even the most obviously public manifesto nearly always contains some of the objects of the subjective world, the objects of the subjective world of Breton's ideas should ideally be complemented by a more intimate mode of reading, one which is receptive to the texture and tone of his private voice.

The reader who truly wishes to understand Breton thus needs to look in mind that even if Breton spent a lot of his time explaining Surrealist ideas, it is altogether simply to decode his work in terms of fixed concepts—automatism, dream and so on. If the heart of Breton's creativity is to be discovered, it is vital that the literary, historical and critical context of his movement be taken into account. The movement of which he was the recognized spokesman is counterbalanced by an attentive focus on the subjective processes which underlay the formulation of his texts. Marguerite Bonnet's study of Breton's formative years goes some way, though not all the way, towards pulling this synthesis together. While she gives a reasonably historical account of Breton's career, she does manage to sustain the parallel theme of his personal preoccupation with his own status as a writer, and the way in which this preoccupation, in turn, produces a series of analyses of individual texts sufficient to demonstrate the reciprocal relation of private sensibility and public performance.

In its painstaking detail, her study is a proof, if proof is still needed, that Surrealism did not spring fully-formed from Breton's head in the form of the *Manifeste du Surréalisme* of 1924. It had, of course, evolved slowly and, there-

tally over a period of several years prior to the celebrated *Manifeste* of 1924. Not the least fascinating aspect of Mlle Bonnet's account of this period is the way in which the outlines of the surrealist project emerge of hostility and contradiction rather than from any lucid conceptual debate.

It is characteristic that when, in his 1922 lecture in Barcelona, Breton discussed the nature of the "new art evolution" soon to be designated as Surrealism, he should have been concerned to point out that what he was proposing was not a set of articulated principles but a sort of skin to a current or an atmosphere, "une atmosphère dans un monde où les sensations ont plus de part que les idées... Je compte beaucoup sur la communication de ces sensations en communication de ces idées". Mlle Bonnet is alert to the ways in which intuitions and theories crystallize around the central "sensation" for Breton: the single act of response which he felt in the presence of certain phenomena or patterns of words and which enabled him to identify the passing current of the modern poetic sensibility. Further, she points out the way in which, in the short manifesto "L'Esprit nouveau", Breton chooses not to survey ideas but to describe a real-life encounter with a woman in the rue Bonaparte, implicitly inviting the reader to impute allegorical meanings to the scene.

It is Breton's ability to identify the passing current of the modern poetic sensibility, further, she points out the way in which, in the short manifesto "L'Esprit nouveau", Breton chooses not to survey ideas but to describe a real-life encounter with a woman in the rue Bonaparte, implicitly inviting the reader to impute allegorical meanings to the scene. Breton's early work is a kind of "sensation" which he felt in the presence of certain phenomena or patterns of words and which enabled him to identify the passing current of the modern poetic sensibility. Further, she points out the way in which, in the short manifesto "L'Esprit nouveau", Breton chooses not to survey ideas but to describe a real-life encounter with a woman in the rue Bonaparte, implicitly inviting the reader to impute allegorical meanings to the scene.

Breton's progression from his early quest for a new poetics to his eventual channelling of group energies into revolutionary politics is shown to be the natural result of a genuinely consistent evolution in both private feeling and public stance. The point is underlined well in Breton's own words: "the evolution of Surrealism had been in the air since the beginning of the century."

British literary circles in 1917-18: on the threshold of a brilliant career, the young friend of Valéry dropped literature in favour of a more risky chess game, a decision doubtless hastened by the suicide of his other, vehemently anti-literary friend Jacques Vachet, whose suicide was continued to obsess him for years.











## Restoration texts

By Cyril Mango

PAUL A. UNDERWOOD (Editor):  
The Karlye Camil  
Volume 4: Studies in the Art of the  
Karlye Camil and its Intellectual  
Background  
370pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul.  
£21.50.

Next to St Sophia, the Karlye Camil (as it is spelt in Turkish) or, to give it its Byzantine name, St Saviour of the Chora is today one of the greatest tourist attractions of Istanbul. For this the new edition of the Karlye Camil is a slender piece, but it contains some interesting insights. Excellent as most of the contributions to this volume are, two criticisms may be expressed. The first concerns the inexcusable tardiness of the publication for which no apology is offered. Some of the essays printed here are fifteen years old; none appears to have been revised after 1968. This is particularly regrettable in the case of O. Demus as he himself is all too keenly aware, since many notable advances in the study of Palaeologan art have occurred since 1960.

The second criticism is aimed not so much at the contents of this volume as at the plan of publication adopted by Underwood. When a scholarly institution undertakes to restore and investigate an ancient monument, especially one of such artistic and historical importance as the Karlye Camil, it has a clear obligation to make all its findings known. It is also accepted practice that the final publication should supersede all interim reports. Unfortunately, neither of these rules has been followed here.

Little account has been given of the architecture of the Karlye Camil and no proper drawings have been presented. The structural history of the monument was to some extent elucidated by limited excavations carried out by D. Oates in 1957-58. These were summarised in a nine-page preliminary report which put forward, without any detailed evidence, certain conclusions that would not have been expected from the historical information at our disposal. The final publication does not take us any further. Almost nothing is said of the smaller finds made in the course of these excavations as well as in the tomb inside the church. The Karlye Camil also contains some noteworthy pieces of Byzantine figural sculpture of various periods, but these, too, receive no comment. Finally, we are told only in passing that the Karlye Camil had stained glass, but was published by A. H. S. Megaw in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, volume 17—yet its bearing on the visual effect of the interior is all too obvious. In other words, the interested scholar will not find in the "final" four-volume publication much of the vital evidence regarding the monument: it will be well advised to look up the preliminary reports scattered in several volumes of *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, but these, too, will not always satisfy his curiosity. I would gladly have exchanged a hundred pages of iconographic comparisons for a full exposition of the findings made in the Karlye Camil, some of which, alas, are not likely ever to become known.

Two outstanding contributions deserve to be singled out. J. Sevónko, using a good deal of hitherto unpublished material, presents a remarkably vivid and simply documented portrait of Theodore Metochites, the scholar politician who subsidised the restoration and decoration of the Chora in about 1310-21, and who, furthermore, was one of the most interesting intellectual personalities of the late Byzantine period. O. Demus, with his usual clarity and sensitivity, places the mosaics and frescoes of the Karlye Camil within the context of the stylistic development of Byzantine painting from the late twelfth century onwards. Thanks to his comprehensive survey, the Karlye Camil appears not so much as the peak of late Byzantine art as it has often been considered, but as a supremely accomplished representative of a matured phase, and, following the rather more creative "renaissance" of the last third of the thirteenth century. A good deal of space is devoted to iconography: two contributions by J. Lafontaine-Dosogne on the infancy cycle of the Virgin and of Christ, one by Underwood on the cycle of Christ's ministry, and one by S. Dor, Nersisyan, on the pictorial programme of the church.

In the  
**Spectator**  
this week

John Terrance on  
the British Empire  
Penelope Houston on  
British documentary films  
Brynn Robertson on  
Vorticism  
Reviews of racing books  
Take another look 20p

## Gunners versus sappers

By Simon Pepper

CHRISTOPHER DUFFY:  
Fire and Stone  
The Science of Fortress Warfare  
1650-1850  
207pp. Newton Abbott: David and  
Charles. £4.95.

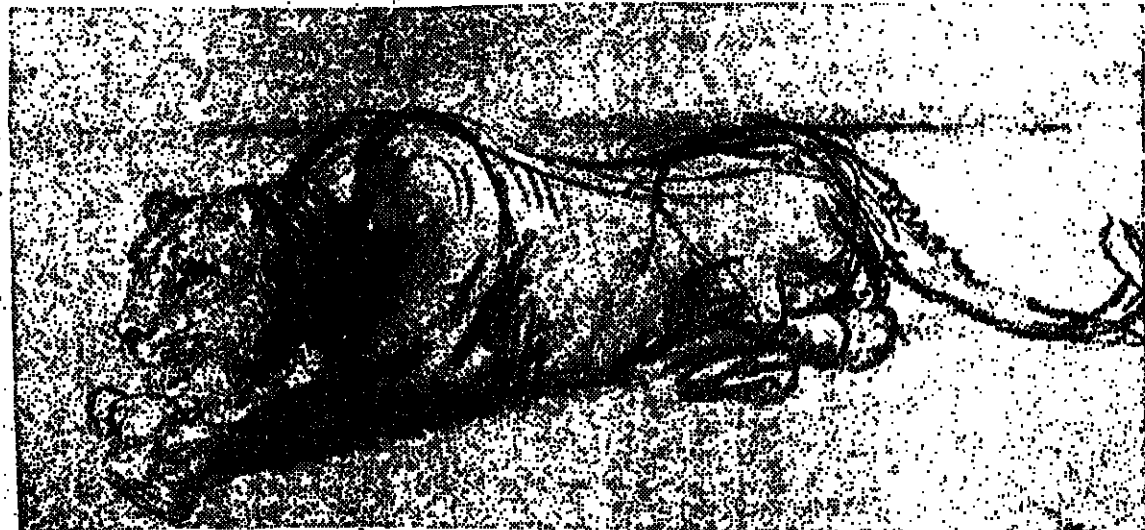
There is a curious gap between the reality and the historical coverage of early modern warfare. The books concentrate on campaigns of manoeuvre and forced marches, culminating in clashes of great armies which (despite their grim slaughter and often inconclusive results) have inspired historians with incidents of drama, gallantry and romance. Yet for both soldiers and civilians it was sieges, not battles, that dominated their experiences of war. Armies generally crawled from place to place; retarded by poor roads, inadequate supply systems and primitive work; often with no more ambitious objective than the occupation of a town or province to be used as a bargaining counter in the next round of diplomacy. Since armies on the move felt obliged to capture enemy fortifications capable of threatening their lines of communication, positional warfare became an endless series of sieges.

The importance of these operations is reflected in the many technical treatises published from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century, and the physical legacy of hundreds of overgrown fortifications in the killing grounds near the borders of France, Germany and the Low Countries. These fortresses and some epic sieges (such as Malta, Vienna and Gibraltar) have recently attracted attention. However, the science of fortress warfare (and there can be no doubt that it was highly scientific

when compared to the confusion of a field engagement) has been neglected by modern writers. Christopher Duffy's *Fire and Stone* helps to remedy this neglect.

Mr Duffy's presentation is highly organized. His first chapters deal with fortress location and defensive strategy, making the point that border fortresses were sometimes able to block a pass or river crossing, but more often served merely to delay the progress of invaders, thus purchasing time for a defensive mobilization. The construction of the fortress is then described, with sections on each of the main components: bastions, cavaliers, ditch, outworks and glacis. Although the full title makes it clear that this book is not primarily a study of military architecture, Mr Duffy's description of the seventeenth and eighteenth century systems and garrisons may be of use elsewhere. Following a short account of the administration and command structure of the fortress, the author takes us step by step through the stages of the classic formal siege of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The final chapter shows how these principles were applied (and sometimes flouted) in four celebrated operations: the two sieges of Namur (1692 and 1695) where the great masters of the art, Vauban and Marlborough, were pitted against each other; the Anglo-Dutch naval bombardment of Algiers in 1816; and the siege of Antwerp in 1832.

This kind of sequential presentation can be dreadfully dull, but Mr Duffy enlivens his accounts with excellent illustrations and anecdotes culled from a wide range of contemporary memoirs and treatises. His book is both enjoyable and well-informed, my only caveat being the rather shallow treatment of the fifteenth and sixteenth-century background. Very few of the researching siege warfare will find the commanders on both sides preoccupied above all with money. A truly realistic warfare demands the services of an accountant or a surveyor to put a price on the defence of the King's Works.



A drawing by Rembrandt in the British Museum: one of 116 reproductions ranging from Landseer's "Monarch of the Glen" to Direr's rhinoceros, selected by Anthony Dera for animals in Art, the latest Giant Art Paperback from Phaidon (110pp. £3.95).

## Searching out the showpieces

By Gregory Martin

ELLIS WATERHOUSE:  
Roman Baroque Painting  
A List of its Principal Painters and  
their Works in and around Rome  
1650-1750  
112pp. Phaidon. £1.95.

Roman Baroque Painting has grown out of one of its distinguished author's earlier publications which first appeared in a limited edition in 1957 and is now almost impossible to obtain. These were the volumes for the English art-historian in Rome. With Baroque's lists of Troceno and Renaissance pictures as an exemplar, Hermann Voss as an inspiration, and near-contemporary guides and biographies to hand (but few photographs), the unfathomable seventeenth-century paintings in the churches and palaces were virgin but arduous territory.

The fruit of Sir Ellis Waterhouse's feat of exploration is now a well-produced book containing an introductory survey, critical bibliography, and location lists (set out by artist and supported by reproductions of paintings made for the public display, chiefly after

places and frescoes) by about sixty artists. The topographical index contains some 260 entries—an indication of the mammoth proportions of the task which Sir Ellis set himself some forty years ago, and to which he has since intermittently returned.

He is evidently a good traveller, delighting perhaps in the obstacles so often encountered by the tourist in Italy (churches shut, or if open, faulty electricity or services taking time to obtain). These were the days of the Apparitione della Guardia, Noble or the nearby Sala della Camera Matilde in the Vatican, where long and tedious, probably then long unrecorded, by Abbadi and Romanelli.

A good many of the artists listed here are minor figures: Canini, Ciampi, and Canini, to name but three. Since the publication of this book's prototype in 1937, more names or lengthy articles have appeared on most of the major figures: Bacciolo, Pietro da Cortona and Mola, for instance, a forthcoming monograph on Lanfranco. A key, early figure in the development of the Roman Baroque—Jas. J. Sir Ellis's "Baroque"—has led Sir Ellis to a deeper understanding of his work, and to a more complete picture of the Baroque in Rome.

Incorrect or misleading. Nevertheless, these exhaustive lists, preceded by useful, short introductory biographies and up-to-date references to recent literature, provide a valuable survey both for the intelligent visitor to Rome and for the reference scholar and students of the period. Probably no one will undertake such a mammoth task again, for this survey defines the boundaries of the stock of Baroque showpieces in the area. Only one source, as Sir Ellis points out, remains untraced: the closure of the S. Maria della Vittoria.

The thirty-eight-page history of Baroque painting in Rome is remarkable for its clarity of detail and masterly sweep, and is much to be preferred to Sir Ellis's chapters on the subject in his *Italian Baroque Painting* of 1962. Now, up-to-date, the book gives a new dimension to the Baroque phenomenon for the student and the scholar alike. Sir Ellis's book is a masterpiece of clarity and a cut-throat.

Dividing the Baroque period into the pontifical reigns of the three popes, the book shows the dominant role of the papacy in the Baroque, and the influence of the papacy on the Baroque. Sir Ellis's book is a masterpiece of clarity and a cut-throat.

Italians. Christopher Duffy is clearly a Northern European specialist and sometimes too readily accepts northern accounts of northern innovations. Vauban, to be sure, systematized the method of attack based on approaches and parallels, but the method was described and illustrated by Francesco Marcellini in the mid-sixteenth century, and published posthumously in 1599. Indeed, the rarity of this sumptuously illustrated treatise has been attributed to Vauban who owned a copy and say some Italians, dispatched agents throughout Europe to buy up and destroy any other copies they could find.

One of Mr Duffy's appendices, deserves special mention. In it he describes and illustrates a siege warfare played by the Kriepel Society, the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, and which is certainly an excellent vehicle for the discussion of the finer points of the art. The siege has always seemed to me to be the form of warfare best adapted to warfare simulation. Its rules, its pace, and the ability to record on a model or plan the approaches, parallels and batteries—even underground mines—all commend it. Troop movements, siege-work construction and the destructive effect of weapons may all be determined by the throw of a dice but this, in my opinion, is only half the story. Siege warfare was an economic operation. As Mr Duffy shows, it was a highly-planned piecework basis. The construction of fieldworks and permanent fortifications involved the efforts of thousands of labourers and cost prodigious sums. Anyone researching siege warfare will find the commanders on both sides preoccupied above all with money. A truly realistic warfare demands the services of an accountant or a surveyor to put a price on the defence of the King's Works.

## The cure for hopelessness

By G. M. Carstairs

KENNETH W. NEWELL (Editor):  
Health by the People  
206pp. Geneva: World Health  
Organization. 36 Sw fr.

MARTIN ELLIOT SHVERSTEIN,  
LOK CHANG and  
NATHANIEL MACON (Editors):  
Acupuncture and Moxibustion  
Handbook for the Barefoot Doctors  
of China  
118pp. New York: Schocken Books.  
£4.25 (paperback, £1.95).

Every year the World Health Organization churns out numerous reports, bulletins, manuals, public health papers and technical publications. These are addressed to specialists, practitioners in particular fields of health care and make dry reading for anyone else. Buried among them, however, are some remarkable, even dramatic, stories—such as that of the Madras experiment in the chemotherapy of tuberculosis which revolutionized the treatment of that disease throughout the world; or the announcement that a two-year-old girl in a village near Chitragong, in Bangladesh, who developed a rash on September 15, 1975, may prove to be the last person in Asia to have suffered from variola major, the severe form of smallpox, because two months later Bangladesh joined the rest of the Asian country in being declared free of that disease. Stories such as these are presented for medical readers in WHO's monthly *Chronicle* and for the wider public in its glossy *Health by the People*. Very occasionally, however, one finds among the cataract of its technical publications a book which conveys something new and important, and in plain language—*Health by the People* is such a book.

It is a by-product of WHO's painstaking discovery, in 1973, that in spite of a general health service which has made progress in medical science, the standard of health care for the rural poor, who form a majority of the world's population, has advanced very little. One after another of the populous countries of the Third World there is the same story of malnutrition and infection, giving rise to very high rates of mortality in infancy and early adult life. It is not simply a medical problem: these are major disaster areas, in which poverty, hunger, disease and ignorance combine to create a spiral of passive hopelessness. So much needs to be done that at first one can only wonder where to begin, or whether these spiritless communities are not beyond recovery.

*Health by the People* consists of nine descriptions of radical improvements in health care, in as many developing countries. Each chapter is different because each describes a different economic and cultural setting; and yet each begins from a similar starting-point of rural poverty, disease and apparent hopelessness. Three of the chapters describe transformations brought about by radical political change at the national level, in China, Cuba and Tanzania. Here, the emphasis is in each case on a new, corporate ideology, associated with the rise of a new political class. In China, Cuba and Fidel Castro; in Tanzania, also, the supremacy of group values over the interests of the individual are constantly emphasized. Visitors to these countries and to the West, Central and East Africa have remarked upon the relative absence of corruption, and of sudden personal affluence in Tanganyika as compared with other "developing" countries. In each country the personal affluence of the ruling class is discouraged by the state, and the high turnover of village-level staff. He too makes very little mention of community participation in the health programme; it is left with the feeling that it has a very long way to go.

This impression is still more strongly conveyed in the three remaining reports. The chapters which describe rural health projects in Central Java, in the dry Indian plains of Maharashtra, and in mountain villages in Guatemala, each describe the work of dedicated workers who have found the success of their respective local undertakings; almost as an

afterthought they express the hope that their mode of operation could usefully be replicated in other areas. These are very personal accounts, which add to their interest.

Guatemala Nurohio describes how he tackled the apparent reluctance of impoverished Guatemalan villagers to take advantage of health-care facilities when these first became available. As a doctor he was keenly aware of the prevalence of malnutrition and infection; but only when he talked with the more remote villagers did he realize that what they needed most of all was not medicines, but help to increase the yield of their rice-fields to build fish-ponds, and to start rearing chickens and goats. These villagers knew what they most lacked; but they had lost all hope and so had sunk into apathy. It seems that sometimes a certain momentum has to be achieved—in this instance, with help from outside—before a community can begin to meet its own basic economic and health needs.

Rajivkumar Arora and his wife, Maheshwari, are both doctors, graduates of the Government Medical College in Vellore, South India. When they first practised medicine with village patients, they soon became aware of the pointlessness of curing episodes of acute infection or chronic malnutrition, unless something demonstrably more helpful can be offered in their place, however, it would be merely destructive to denigrate the morale-sustaining contribution of traditional healers.

These are the practical considerations which have prompted the governments of India and China to support the continuance of their ancient systems of medicine. In the case of India, Professor Udaya of Varanasi Medical College gives a sympathetic account of the concepts of Ayurvedic medicine, indicating its affinities with the theory of humours, and of corresponding temperaments which underlay Greek and Roman medical teachings, and whose influence persisted throughout medieval times. This adds interest to Professor Udaya's account of the efforts of Ayurvedic teachers to reconcile their essentially pre-scientific theories of physiology to the evidence of modern medicine based upon a quite different understanding of our body structure and functions. However interesting an account of antique medicine may be, few of us, when acutely ill, would prefer a homeopathic dose of a medieval prescription if a potent antibiotic were available.

This reflection occurs even more forcibly when one reads *Acupuncture and Moxibustion*, a fascinating handbook for the "barefoot doctors" of China, published in Peking, which is now available in translation. This little book sets out in admirably clear terms the rationale and the practice of acupuncture and moxibustion (which means the application of local heat at defined acupuncture points). The theory is based upon the concept of *Chin Lo*, a network of pathways which connect the internal organs to points on the body surface; these pathways transmit *Chi* fluid, which enables us to carry out ordinary life functions, such as grasping with the hand, speaking, and abstract thinking; they also alter our responses through which cold and other harmful influences can affect the inner organs. The numerous acupuncture points, mapped out all over the body, provide a means of mobilizing positive energies to counteract symptoms of illness.

Like most pre-scientific explanatory systems, this is all-embracing and unequivocal, a final revelation of the secrets of the body. It incorporates the key concepts of *Yin* and *Yang*; *Chin* lines on the inner aspects of the limbs are of the *Yin* type and are associated with the so-called solid organs (which include the lungs and the spleen) while those on the outer aspects are of the *Yang* type and connect with hollow internal organs.

It is remarkable to find here, put forward as an ancient system of medical lore which postulates a purely hypothetical physiology—just as traditional Hindu belief postulates a theory of pure, unspiced semen (*Shukra* and *Vajras*), *Chin* lines on the inner aspects of the limbs are of the *Yin* type and are associated with the so-called solid organs (which include the lungs and the spleen) while those on the outer aspects are of the *Yang* type and connect with hollow internal organs.

In the book areas of the world, as elsewhere, medicine is not the people, but for the convenience and welfare of the doctor. Public health

work should begin with a dialogue with the people, encouraging them to consider themselves and their situation, and to state their needs. In only a minority of these reports is any reference made to the systems of traditional medicine which long preceded modern medical care. This is no doubt due to the public health training of most of the contributors; they have been taught to measure the effectiveness of any treatment on programmatic and in terms of reducing mortality or morbidity. Pre-scientific medicine has been conspicuously unsuccessful. Witch-doctors and the practitioners of ancient medicine have indeed played a very important role in the past, by assigning a place and a meaning to the scheme of things to illness and to premature death. In their several ways, they interposed themselves and enabled the victims and their relatives to take appropriate action, and in so doing they made the world a less threatening place. For many centuries they carried out this task of reassurance and moral support, helping to provide that climate of hope which is a powerful element in the natural process of recovery. Where modern medicine and hygiene have begun to be available, the old magical certainty has been liable to be threatened by the new concept of critical evaluation. Unless something demonstrably more helpful can be offered in their place, however, it would be merely destructive to denigrate the morale-sustaining contribution of traditional healers.

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It is equally disconcerting to read about treatments for pulmonary tuberculosis which seem unlikely either to arrest the disease or to prevent the spread of infection, while the showpiece which distinguishes cholera from other forms of diarrhoea proposes five needle insertions, followed in stages by another ten, together with the application of heat at two other points. (Western medical practice has shown that the most effective life-saving measure during a cholera epidemic is intravenous transfusion to counteract the severe dehydration which soon develops.) *Acupuncture and Moxibustion* has the naive charm of its unhesitating certainty, and this very confidence must be one of the practitioners' most potent assets; but when it is relied upon in the treatment of acute infections, then one can only hope that the "barefoot doctors' kits now include tablets of tetracycline as well as arrays of acupuncture needles and moxibustion sticks.

**T.L.S.**

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## Forty years on

By E. L. Miller

JNGAR B. GRAVES (Editor):  
A Bibliography of English History  
to 1187  
1,103pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford  
University Press, £20.

This massive work of scholarship, which will be as indispensable to historians as it is inevitably bulky, is a testament to the vision of Edgar B. Graves. The *Sources and Literature of English History from the Earliest Times to about 1187*, Graves' work appeared in 1936, the fruit of a course of lectures given at Harvard over the previous decade. The bibliographical studies were only one of Graves' preoccupations. In 1890, the year his course on sources began, he had published *The Child Merchant*, still only fully acknowledged in this institution in England; he continued his researches into English legal and urban history; and in 1897 he also published a bibliography of English municipal history which has like-wise been revised and brought up to date recently by G. H. Martin and S. McIntyre. Returning to *Sources and Literature*, however, new publications made it, like any bibliography, out of date even before it was published. Almost at once, therefore, Graves set about revising it and, although he did not live to complete the task, his Harvard colleagues saw the reason through publication. In 1915, in this version that most of us have consulted over the years, however conscious we were that the gaps were growing larger as the years passed, for the older literature it was still the only comprehensive bibliography.

Propositions that it should be brought up to date were soon heard and eventually, in 1935, a joint editorial board to undertake the work was established by the Royal Historical Society and the Medieval Academy of America, soon joined by the American Historical Society. Many institutions have given aid, including the British Academy, the American Council on Learned Societies and the Ford Foundation; many distinguished scholars have given their counsel, including Melvin and Palmer, Powicke and Stearns, Knowles and Edwards; but the heaviest burden has inevitably fallen on the successive editors, W. E. Lunt and Edgar B. Graves. Their work has brought the enterprise to completion, and weights heavily on the American side the Anglo-American cooperation of which it was a signal example.

The new version, *A Bibliography of English History to 1187*, shares some features with its original. It has the same terminal date, not unreasonably since 1187 is the point of departure of the *Timeline* of the Bibliography of British History (another Anglo-American venture). Unlike that series, however, Graves' volume like Graves' is essentially restricted to English his-

tory. The exceptions are certain bibliographical works and some fundamental works on Wales and Ireland in the pre-conquest period. The decision to limit the volume's scope in this way is justifiable on practical grounds and certainly the qualification "English" has not been too narrowly interpreted. It is pleasing, for example, to find the student's attention drawn not only to Marc Bloch's *Feudal Society* but also to his collected papers.

Some modification of Graves' plan, however, there had to be. The rapid extension of knowledge, especially in certain fields, during the past generation made changes necessary. This was particularly true of those sections of the volume dealing with economic and cultural history, where extensive revision was essential. At the same time, primary and secondary works relating to a particular matter have, wherever feasible, been brought to date. A change from Graves' practice all to the good. The outstanding contrast between this volume and Graves', however, is that of bulk: the *Bibliography* now has 7,221 numbered entries, many of them composite. Entry number 7,127, for example, lists four of C. G. Richardson's essays on the schools of Oxford and Northampton; and number 5,841, the notice of J. C. Russell's *British Medieval Population*, also draws attention to frequent use of his on the topic and to some essays by others critical of his method or conclusions. Since principal and subsidiary entries alike can be traced in the index, these composite entries will be particularly helpful

to beginners equipped with only limited clues to the literature of their chosen field of study.

This, then, in the practical sense, will be a useful book. It is full enough to meet the needs of most students and researchers. It is strong where Graves was strong in making sure that the rich contribution of local societies to medieval studies is not overlooked. It requires time and use to test its accuracy fully: so far I have chanced upon only half a slip, for while in No. 4,963 an article of mine is attributed to R. H. Hilton the attribution is given correctly in No. 5,457. Professor Hilton may feel inclined to forgive so slight a peccadillo. The work is, of course, already out of date, for it does not include anything published later than 1970; but no compilation on this scale could do better.

As we look to the future, however, and to the renewed proliferation of publications, we must wonder whether there will ever again be a bibliography of medieval history of this sort. Only a decade was needed by Graves for his first edition and, despite his death, only fifteen years elapsed before the second edition was published: the present fruit of international cooperation took forty years to ripen from the initiative of 1935. Maybe it will be possible to solve problems of bulk by "microbibliography" and the problems of proliferating material by computerization; but one feels that the heroic days of Graves and Lunt and Graves, wrangling single-handed with a tidal wave of literature, are over.

## Essential Africa

By Barry Bloomfield

THEODORE BESTERMAN:  
A World Bibliography of African  
Bibliographies  
Revised and brought up to date by  
J. D. Pearson  
241pp. Oxford: Blackwell, £10.

The fourth edition of Theodore Besterman's *A World Bibliography of Bibliographies* was published in five volumes in 1965-66 and the complete edition, now more than a decade expected from him, J. D. Pearson then set to work to quarry from these entries relating to Africa, and since the original work covered only material published up to 1963 he determined to extend his range and add those Africanist bibliographies published up to 1973. We now have the results presented in the familiar, but ever so useful, format: 1,326 titles extracted from the original work plus a further 1,634 titles added by Professor Pearson. The bibliographies are arranged by continent, region and country.

Almost every entry has been personally inspected and all the

countries of Africa are included in the coverage. There are a significant number of Russian entries, but Arabic material is generally more comprehensive than is that of our competitors (*A Bibliography of African Bibliographies*, fourth edition published by the South African Public Library in 1961; and that by Andrew Gelling issued in 1968) and contains at least 50 per cent more material.

Slight criticisms can be made. First, the index consists only of personal authors and titles, and presumably entries in italic are subject entries? (There are no institutional entries, it seems.) Second, on occasion the arrangement of entries is puzzling (viz. Martin Distel's bibliography of French thesis literature on Africa) and third, there are a few omissions (e.g. Rachelle Lever's bibliography of African studies and literature, since 1945). The book is not cheap, at just less than 9p a double-column page, but it is packed with vital bibliographical information for the Africanist.

## Oriental limits

By Raymond Dawson

THEODORE BESTERMAN:  
A World Bibliography of Oriental  
Bibliographies  
725pp. Oxford: Blackwell, £30.

J. D. Pearson has extracted from the 1965 edition of Theodore Besterman's *A World Bibliography of Bibliographies* all the entries on Asian and Oceanic subjects and updated the material to the end of 1973, by which time a mere decade of bibliographical activity had increased by 66 per cent the volumes he had adhered rigidly to the principles set out by Besterman in his introduction, but since not everybody has Besterman on his shelf, a bibliography would have been useful. One problem is that books which contain excellent bibliographies but are not themselves primarily bibliographical works cannot be admitted because of the difficulty of knowing where to draw the line, but the editors for complete coverage of strictly bibliographical works leads to the inclusion of outdated trivia. Bibliographies are so active that the next edition will have to be a major revision.

## Gaps on the shelf

By A. J. Turner

H. A. FEISENBERGER (Editor):  
Sale Catalogues of Libraries of  
Eminent Persons  
Volume 11: Scientists  
296pp. Mansell with Sotheby Parke  
Berner, £11.50.

As libraries reflect men, so sale catalogues reflect libraries, but it is a view seen in a distorting mirror. With some rare exceptions the sale catalogues of libraries, even of eminent men, have only a cursory value. For the historian or biographer interested in reconstructing a particular library they are only partially useful, and often of virtually no use. The problems of interpretation which they pose, their strengths and their limitations, are well displayed in the four catalogues contained in this eleventh volume of Mansell/Sotheby's increasingly expensive, but now complete, twelve-volume series of selected sale catalogues in facsimile reprint.

The four "scientists" selected, Elias Ashmole, Robert Hooke, John Ray and Edward Telford Walley, are all notable figures. All the interest. The catalogues of the libraries, however, vary in value. That of Elias Ashmole indeed represents only a fragment of the books that he owned. In January 1679 "A Library of Books" together with coins, manuscripts, seals, antiquities and curiosities were destroyed in a fire at his chambers in Temple Lane. In 1692 a great part of the library passed to the University of Oxford. Edward Lhwyd, Keeper of the Ashmolean Museum, compiling a catalogue of it which took up 100 sheets of paper and included 500 autologous books. As a document, therefore, the catalogue of the remaining 1,025 titles is difficult to use since there is no way of knowing which of the books it contains were replacements bought since the fire, which new to Ashmole, or which had been in "A Library of Books" and the only clear information that it provides is that the 1,027 books listed were in Ashmole's library during the last years of his life and that he thought them unsuitable or inappropriate for the library of the Ashmolean.

The catalogue of Hooke's library is more interesting, in that it is probably more complete and more useful. This is simply because Hooke noted, in his diary, the books he bought, sometimes with the price paid and where. By combining this evidence, and that obtainable from other existing books, comments in letters and contemporary journals with the list given in the sale catalogue, it is possible to reconstruct a good part of Hooke's

library with some certainty as to plot something of its growth.

The catalogue of John Ray's library, a serious collection of working books in natural history and theology, is similarly that of Walley, however, is vitiated by the fact that his books are haphazardly mingled with that of an unnamed lawyer, No. 176pp. Mansell and Busby, £3.50.

Some commentators have seen Cornelius as an ugly portent of the nihilistic world he inhabits, notably Peter Nichols in last November's issue of *Foundation*, who goes so far as to quote Yeats on widening gyres. This is a little like denouncing a policeman for an unwholesome interest in crime—which is not to deny that Mr Moorcock, like some cops, may, like his work, too much the ironic distancing is oddly convincing. "Irony is no substitute for imagination," remarks Cornelius, smugly, knowing that his creator has, if anything, a surplus of both.

Below the irony and the ambiguities are some surprisingly traditional, decent liberal sentiments: much the same could be said of James Bond and Cornelius's resemblance to a hyperkinetic Bond is more than a little obvious. He is a sentimental, more freely moved than tears that are characters in literature since Lord Lynd. Under the pansexual permissiveness he's a fighter for order. Beneath the bravura and bravado is a simple credo: "Only love can conquer disintegration. Only love denies the Second Law of Thermodynamics." But as the old Auden told the young Auden, whether we love one another or not, we die anyway. Fighting against entropy, Cornelius is the twentieth-century boy on the burning deck.

Mr Moorcock's prose style is clean and precise. He is often uncomplainingly funny—as in the description of the Last of the Left-Wing Intellectuals: "Because of his interest in the statistics of intermarriage in Vietnam in the hard-boiled war. There had been few signs of it on Parliament Hill." The opacities are deliberate, unavoidable: "robbed of their ambiguities, things cease to exist."

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## Love and entropy

By Ron Kirk

MICHAEL MOORCOCK:  
The Lives and Times of Jerry  
Cornelius  
176pp. Allison and Busby, £3.50.

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## A bonny fighter

By Allan Massie

DAVID WALKER:  
Ash  
256pp. Collins, £3.50.

As the tide rushed in the sandpipers would have no choice but to fly away. He was wrong again. They ran from the tide. . . . The sandpipers teetered and tottered and ran again. They were enjoying it, fun to be hunted by the tide. Fun to be hunted? To be hunted, that was a clue, a memory, some hint of an idea.

The idea came to Ash, ex-RAF pilot, ex-mate of Goldie, ex-laid, ex-husband and smuggler, nerve gone, drunk enough to be drink-shy, recovering from pneumonia in a cabin in the New Brunswick woods; his thoughts lurching towards a novel and the seduction of Lorna, chaotic but vital wife of his wet tycoon younger brother; and then, suddenly, a killer on the run.

This is the take-off point of David Walker's new novel and while it is not *Greenmantle* or *Kidnapped*, it is a true thriller, a novel that is as interesting and, I think, appealing to Malcolm Lowry; so would the evocation of the woods and shore. Here again, though, Mr Walker brings Buchan to mind; make the setting true and clear and the action works as of itself.

## Primogravidus

By John McEwen

CATHERINE STORR:  
Unnatural Fathers  
152pp. Quartet, £3.95.

The dust-jacket of *Unnatural Fathers*, a slick painting of a rather hairy man sucking a baby, does not interfere with the novel's interest in the medical world. With a prime minister called "Fred" and a confidential "establishment" hostess called the Duchess D'Ys any hope of this, despite numerous references to recent events actual or fanciful, is soon proved false. Apart from an inside dig or two at the medical world there is none of the anger of satire or the surprise of humour to hold the reader's attention. Venetia and Martin (one of the characters to become more than vehicles for the plot and these two belong in a novel of manners rather than an attempted satire.

have the tale and read *Pilgrim's Progress* (Ash prefers Auden) and might even have called him "rascals" but Alan Brock would have saluted him as a bonny fighter—even in his struggle against the battle. The Hemingway touches his frequent communications with himself are reminiscent of Thomas Hardy's characters of his generation, even if they stood on one remove, deriving from Gable or Cooper.

Mr Walker brings the adventure novel back to private life. It is good to find that it is not necessary to shoot presidents or topple governments, ravage Africa, rob Fort Knox or lay nergresses to generate excitement; that a simple chase in which man is both quarry and hunter is enough. The device of the parallel plot of Ash's novel might seem odd, but the ironic distancing is more so as his involvement in that book intertwines with and acts upon the course of events. It does not come out like that, however, because it is well handled, proving once again that you can go away with what you can bring off. The use of this other novel (and we are given large chunks of it; very good too) it seems to be a novel Mr Walker wrote back in 1949) would have been interesting and, I think, appealing to Malcolm Lowry; so would the evocation of the woods and shore. Here again, though, Mr Walker brings Buchan to mind; make the setting true and clear and the action works as of itself.

Anna Blair has based her story on the bare parish-register facts about members of the Blair family living in Dundonald from the 1580s till the beginning of the eighteenth century. She gives a detailed picture of life in the one-roomed shack, with only a hole in the roof for a chimney, where so many Blair were born only to die at once, taking their mothers with them. The men worked for others richer than themselves, and counted themselves lucky if they had the recondite strip of land called a rig. To have a house with a separate compartment for the animals was a mark of superiority; a cottage with a piece of land round it an impossible dream.

Mrs Blair's approach is serious, in a sense too serious: the social historian in her has not yet learnt to cobble with the novelist. Rightly concerned to avoid the customary excesses of the historical novel, she sometimes goes to the other extreme. When one of the characters is "Barbedead" after the Fenside Rising we are spared a wee Indian choppy of flagging, rum and beautiful slaves, but given only the primest five-page outline to cover ten years in the young man's life, and no insight into how the extraordinary disfigurement of his world affected him. There are signs of a loosening of the schoolmaster's grip in an affectionate and lively portrait of a young child near the end of the book. Indeed, the author is at her best with children: perhaps in the promised further instalments of Blair family history the adult characters too will be allowed to inhabit a more imaginatively created world.

## Grimly living

By Catherine Peters

ANNA BLAIR:  
A Tree in the West  
252pp. Collins, £3.50.

Three generations of Scots peasants living in Ayrshire in the seventeenth century are the subject of this well-researched first novel. Their lives, which seldom rise above starvation level, were made even grimmer by the unbending punitive attitudes of the Kirk sisters. The Kirk gave some dignity to these primitive existences, did so at the expense of the colour and richness of the Catholic ritual it superseded, and the thousands who put their mark to the Covenant had little idea of the issues they were risking their lives for.

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## Through the gaps

By Frank Pike

THEODORE BESTERMAN:  
A World Bibliography of Oriental  
Bibliographies  
725pp. Oxford: Blackwell, £30.

J. D. Pearson has extracted from the 1965 edition of Theodore Besterman's *A World Bibliography of Bibliographies* all the entries on Asian and Oceanic subjects and updated the material to the end of 1973, by which time a mere decade of bibliographical activity had increased by 66 per cent the volumes he had adhered rigidly to the principles set out by Besterman in his introduction, but since not everybody has Besterman on his shelf, a bibliography would have been useful. One problem is that books which contain excellent bibliographies but are not themselves primarily bibliographical works cannot be admitted because of the difficulty of knowing where to draw the line, but the editors for complete coverage of strictly bibliographical works leads to the inclusion of outdated trivia. Bibliographies are so active that the next edition will have to be a major revision.

The main conviction which appears to lie behind the writing is that in life people reveal the important things about themselves largely in placid, trivial ways, in the interstices of inconsequential conversations, and in mundane surroundings, the responsibility of the author being to render all this so accurately that the reader's response is as close as possible to what it would be if he actually witnessed the episodes described. This conscientious avoidance of conventional novelistic means of catching and holding a reader's attention is to be respected, but that attention will be caught in the way to being as fortuitous as in real life.

The reader may justifiably be somewhat sceptical of the claim on the dust-jacket of *The Ghost Companion* (191pp. Gollancz, £2.80) that each of the stories in Peter Haining's anthology is based on his author's personal experience of the supernatural. There is, one suspects, more invention than recollection in this well-chosen selection of ghostly encounters, but the offerings are none the worse for this. Few genuinely attested apparitions come as neatly shrouded as the fictional "coups d'état" and in this respect at least fiction is both stranger and, artistically, more satisfying than truth.

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